

# Edmund Pendleton Gaines to Andrew Jackson, October 1, 1817, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

## BRIGADIER-GENERAL EDMUND P. GAINES TO JACKSON.

Camp Montgomery, A. T., October 1, 1817.

(Duplicate)

*General*, I have the honor to lay before you a letter<sup>1</sup> which I have received from the Chiefs of ten of the Seminola towns, in reply to my demand for the delivery of the murderers of our Citizens.

<sup>1</sup> Gaines proceeded with his design of concentrating a force at Fort Scott to overawe the Seminoles. The War Department gave its approval. The Fowltown Indians were on land acquired by the government by the treaty of Fort Jackson. They stood their ground and challenged Gaines to cross to their side of the river. He naturally felt that to acquiesce would be to recognize their claim; but he made no effort to induce the Fowltown Indians to change their minds. In fact, his actions would seem to indicate that he wished the Indians to precipitate war. He continued to concentrate troops at Fort Scott to the number of 800. A flying rumor said that the Indians were placing their women and children in Pensacola, a place of safety, while the men went to war. The story was soon contradicted, but it had served to waken again the suspicion against Spain. Another exaggerated rumor, forwarded by Major Twiggs, was that an Indian council, attended by 2700 persons, had decided to go to war if the whites crossed the Flint River. Such, indeed, was the decision of the Indians of Fowltown; but they were an insignificant number and rumor had magnified the importance of their threat. Gaines met it by ordering Major Twiggs to attack Fowltown.

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By this communication it appears that instead of a compliance, the Chiefs have set up a claim against us for the lives of three Indians, for whom they allege they have not yet taken satisfaction. They charge us with having killed ten of their Warriors, and allowing a balance of three to be due them, they consequently admit, that they have killed seven of our citizens. They acknowledge the murder of a woman (Mrs. Garret) and her two children but justify the act upon the ground that the Warriors who committed this outrage had lost friends, had entered our Settlements to take satisfaction, found at the house of Garret a kettle belonging to the Indians that had been killed, and therefore "Supposing the murder had been committed by the husband of the woman", killed her and her children.

I am convinced that nothing but the application of force, will be sufficient to ensure a permanent adjustment of this affair I shall therefore put the First Brigade in motion for Fort Scott as soon as I can possibly obtain transportation, and I trust that I shall at least by the 20th or 25th reach that place. . . . .